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NOTES ON LATIN AMERICA

THE EDITORS

THE ALGERIAN REVOLUTION BEGINS

RICHARD GIBSON

Black Political Power JAMES BOGGS

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

As readers of the *National Guardian* know, Scott Nearing was expelled from Venezuela late in January for the "crime" of having in his possession copies of *MR* and other similarly incendiary pieces of reading matter. It seems that some reporters at the Caracas airport where Scott landed tipped off the political police, and these defenders of democratic order à la Betancourt took over. Scott was kept under guard overnight and then hustled off to Bogotá, Colombia, where he was accorded the same treatment by another "Ally for Progress." In Caracas, however, left-wing members of parliament raised such a ruckus over the affair that even conservative papers, including the organ of Betancourt's own party, felt obliged to apologize (one of them did so under the whimsical heading "So Nearing, Mr. Sorry"). When the editors of *MR* arrived in Caracas a week or so later, also carrying a copy or two of the magazine, a member of parliament was on hand to observe the proceedings, and everything went off without incident. Our hosts told us that there was no doubt that we owed our quiet reception to the Venezuelan government's desire to avoid another Nearing scandal. So it turns out that Scott's sacrifice was not in vain, and that we were among its chief beneficiaries.

The Cornell University Library publishes from time to time "Reader's Reports." The one for February contains a list of books, with comments, by Professor Walter LaFeber, of the Cornell History Department. Here is what Prof. LaFeber says about MR Press publication *The United States, Cuba, and Castro* by William A. Williams: "Many readers will disagree with this book, but no one should disregard it. I consider it the best analysis yet written on American relations with Castro during the 1959 to early 1961 period. Williams especially raises significant questions about the work of Theodore Draper, whose writings represent the present American consensus on the causes of our difficulties with Cuba." If your library hasn't already bought the book, perhaps you can use this to persuade them to do so.

(*continued on inside back cover*)

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NOTES ON LATIN AMERICA

During the last three weeks of January and the first week of February, we visited six Latin American countries (Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and Venezuela). We had a very specific objective, to discuss the possibility of a Spanish-language edition of *MR* (see full report next month), as well as the more general objectives of establishing contacts and improving our understanding of Latin American realities. We met and talked, often at great length, with dozens of people, mostly political leaders, economists, sociologists, political scientists, and students in these and other fields. For obvious reasons, it was easier for us to establish relations with people of the Left; and, given the very short time available, we made few efforts to go outside these circles, which in any case are very broad in Latin America and undoubtedly include the best and most stimulating minds. What we were seeking throughout was not to accumulate knowledge of facts—for that purpose four weeks in a good library would have been much more productive—but to get a better "feel" for the situation and to develop a more assured perspective within which to place the facts not only of the past and present but of the future as well.

What Kind of Revolution?

Since the Cuban Revolution, it has become commonplace to talk about the "Latin American Revolution." Even the most resolute counter-revolutionaries, like those who are now sitting in the seats of power in Washington, join the chorus, assuring us that their fondest wish is to help the Latin Americans achieve their revolution. "We're all socialists now," said the English Liberal politician Sir William Harcourt, as the 19th century drew to a close. In the same way, with regard to Latin America, it seems that we're all revolutionaries now. Under these circumstances, if we are to avoid ambiguity we must say precisely what we mean by the word "revolution."

As used in what follows, "revolution" means two things

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which are as indissolubly linked as the two sides of a coin. First, it means the overthrow of the old ruling class (or classes) and the accession to power of a new ruling class (or classes). And second, it means a radical change in property relations. Cuba has already had a revolution in precisely this sense, and the most important questions that can be asked about the other countries of Latin America are whether and when they are going to have their revolutions.

But before we can answer these questions, we must inquire whether more than one kind of revolution, in the sense indicated, is possible in Latin America today. More specifically, do Latin American countries face the choice of bourgeois revolution or socialist revolution? It is widely believed that they do, and we ourselves have been inclined to share the belief at least with respect to some of the countries. We are now convinced, however, not only that this is an error but also that it makes difficult if not impossible any clear thinking about the future course of events in Latin America.

A bourgeois revolution can take place only in a country in which property relations and ruling class are non-bourgeois. In the case of Latin America, those who speak in terms of a possible bourgeois revolution usually have in mind a picture of the kind of society which grew up in colonial days and which survived more or less intact through the 19th century. Whatever one may choose to call societies of this kind, they were certainly not bourgeois in the usual sense of the term, from which it follows that it is quite logical to call a revolutionary transformation of one of them, such as took place in Mexico in the two decades after 1910, a bourgeois revolution. In the rest of Latin America, however, similar transformations have taken place by more evolutionary (though by no means always non-violent) processes, and the societies of today are everywhere very different from those of colonial times. In particular, the traditional landowning aristocracies are now mixed up with the financial, commercial, and manufacturing bourgeoisies. Landowners have invested in towns and cities; merchants and bankers have bought land; families have intermarried. By now it is probably safe to say that in every country the bourgeoisie owns the land as well as the capital. This is not to say that the characteristics of the bourgeoisie, including its social attitudes

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and mental habits, have not been influenced by its heritage from the past: obviously they have been, and this is a fact of importance to an understanding of the present. What it does mean is that any analysis and, still more, any course of action that is based on the assumption of division and conflict of interest between landlords and capitalists is bound to go wrong. There is only one ruling class in Latin America today, and it is basically bourgeois in its outlook and interests. It follows that the only possible revolution is one that overthrows bourgeois rule and installs the peasantry and/or the proletariat as the new ruling class(es). The other side of the revolutionary coin can only be the substitution of socialist for bourgeois property relations. In other words, *the only possible revolution in Latin America today is a socialist revolution.*

Only if we keep this firmly in mind can we pose the right questions about Latin America. Instead of asking whether there will be a bourgeois revolution, we have to ask what kind of reforms the bourgeoisie which is already in power is capable of making in its own system. And in discussing revolution, we must focus attention on the development of forces with the will and ability to overthrow the bourgeoisie and build socialism. Let us consider these two problems in turn.

Why Revolution Is Necessary

What may be called the "reform potential" in Latin America of course varies from country to country. Nevertheless, we have no hesitation in saying (1) that in general this potential is low; and (2) that in no country is it high enough to hold out hope of a solution to the increasingly urgent problems of economic development within the framework of the existing system. The reasons for this poor opinion of the Latin American ruling classes' ability to reform their own societies are numerous: here we can only mention the two that seem to us most important.

In the first place, the very fact that the owners of land and the owners of capital are merged together in a single ruling class strongly militates against the carrying out of the kind of thoroughgoing agrarian reforms that are the *sine qua non* of continuing economic development. If the picture of an urban bourgeoisie in conflict with a decadent rural aristocracy were accurate, then there would be real hope of effective land re-

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form within the framework of capitalism. But as we have already seen, this is not the case, and it is very doubtful whether any Latin American bourgeoisie has the will or discipline to impose drastic reforms on itself. This explains, for example, the otherwise baffling fact that Brazil, where industrial development has gone farther and faster in recent years than anywhere else and where an expansion of agricultural production has become a matter of extreme urgency, nevertheless does nothing but talk about agrarian reform.

In the second place, no Latin American country can expect to achieve economic devolopment of a kind that will really benefit the masses of its people unless it also achieves genuine national independence, that is to say, unless it breaks the economic stranglehold that U. S. imperialism now has on the whole area. This, however, the Latin American ruling classes cannot do and even do not want to do. The notion that there is a powerful national bourgeoisie in these countries anxious to break away from U. S. domination and also prepared to go through with it even if it hurts their own interests, is unfortunately a myth. The influence of U. S. capital in the private sector of their economies is pervasive and by no means limited to direct ownership relations (in the world of today control of technology is sometimes even more important than ownership), and the public sector, which is relatively large in some countries, is naturally operated by and for the benefit of the ruling classes. Conflicts of interest between native and foreign capitalists of course do exist, but they are certainly subordinate to the common interest both groups have in exploiting the human and natural resources of the region. And to this powerful tie is added another, common fear of revolution from below. The Latin American bourgeoisies would like to be treated as equals by their North American brothers, but they are not going to jeopardize their wealth and privileges—which, incidentally, are most impressive by anyone's standards—in any quixotic struggles for national independence. But without national independence, the Latin American countries will remain in effect colonial appendages of the North American metropolis. And their most basic and intractable difficulties arise precisely from their past history and present status as colonial appendages.

We have long been convinced that only under socialism

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can the countries of Latin America meet the great demographic, technological, and social challenges of the 20th century. What we saw and heard on the spot in the last few weeks has greatly strengthened that conviction. In terms of objective conditions, there can be no doubt that Latin America needs and is ripe for socialist revolution, not at some distant date in the future but right now.

Are More Revolutions Imminent?

Does this mean that we can expect a rapid spread of revolutionary processes in one or more regions of Central and South America? Many people, including ourselves, have in fact entertained such expectations ever since the victory of the Cuban Revolution four years ago. Unfortunately, we have now come to the reluctant conclusion that this revolutionary optimism was, and still is, based more on wishful thinking than on a sober estimate of possibilities. Our present view is that further successful revolutions are not likely to take place in Latin America in the near future.

The reader is asked to note particularly that we say *successful* revolutions are not likely in the near future. *There is no intention to deny that revolutionary upheavals may take place and may even, as happened in Bolivia in 1952, bring revolutionary regimes to power.* The trouble is that the countries where this could happen in the near future are the weakest and poorest countries, those which lack the human and material resources to build a new social order in the face of the certain hostility of the U. S. on which they are economically dependent and of the ruling classes of their more developed and powerful neighbors. The fate of the Bolivian Revolution tells all too clear a story: it has gradually degenerated and one often hears it said in South America today that the Bolivian government is more under the thumb of the U. S. Embassy than any other government on the continent. In the world of the mid-20th century, it is unfortunately true that successful revolutions can occur only in countries that have already achieved a certain degree of development. And this means, so far as Latin America is concerned, that the pace of revolutionary transformation will be set not by the smaller and weaker countries but by the larger and stronger ones. More concretely, the countries to watch

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are Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Venezuela. And it is by no means clear that even these more developed countries could sustain revolutions unless several were involved and able to lend each other mutual support. It may quite possibly turn out that the next stage of the Latin American Revolution will involve all or most of the countries in the region.

There are two principal reasons why, in our judgment, this next stage is not imminent. First, the existing regimes in the big Latin American countries, despite all their difficulties and problems, are hardly on the verge of collapse. Some of them have considerable popular support; all dispose over armed forces which (so far at any rate) seem to be reasonably reliable; and all can count on U. S. financial and probably also military backing (if in South Vietnam, why not in South America?). Under these circumstances, only broadly based, well led, and well armed revolutionary movements could hope to seize power. This points to the second reason why successful revolutions are not imminent: such revolutionary movements do not yet exist in Latin America. But rather than attempt further generalizations along these lines, we may perhaps more profitably comment briefly on each of the large countries we visited. We follow the order of our itinerary.

Mexico

In recent years, Mexico has been the most stable of all the large Latin American countries. The rate of economic growth has been relatively high, and the political system which emerged from the turbulent years of the Revolution has proved to be a remarkably effective instrument of bourgeois rule. (For an excellent description and analysis of these and related developments, the reader is referred to the article by Andrew Gunder Frank, "Mexico: the Janus Faces of 20th-Century Bourgeois Revolution," which appeared in the November, 1962, issue of *MR*.) The secret of this political system, which in its essence is thoroughly totalitarian, is to retain in the hands of the ruling party (PRI) control over all mass organizations—the party itself, the national peasant federation, and the trade unions. Opposition parties have hardly had more than a token character, and attempts at genuinely independent action in either the political or the economic fields have been savagely repressed.

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Under this setup, what was once a relatively large and powerful left-wing movement has been reduced in the course of the last two decades to a state of impotence. There are many revolutionaries in Mexico, among them some of the most famous intellectuals and artists in Latin America; but one can scarcely speak of a revolutionary movement at all. The Communist Party is very small and weak, and few people in Mexico take it seriously as a political force.

This doesn't mean that the status quo is permanently guaranteed in Mexico or that nothing of importance is happening there. On the contrary, the last two years have witnessed what may turn out to be the rebirth of a meaningful Left. The dominant figure in this new movement is Mexico's greatest living statesman, General Lázaro Cárdenas, under whose presidency in the 1930's the reforms introduced by the Revolution were consolidated and carried forward more than under any other President. In 1961, Cárdenas sponsored a Latin American Conference on National Sovereignty, Economic Emancipation, and Peace; and out of this conference there grew a new Mexican political organization, the Movement of National Liberation (MLN). This is not a political party, but it is laying the foundations on which a political party may be built in the future. This process of organizing outside the official apparatus was carried a step farther in early January of this year with the formation of a new Independent Peasant Central (CCI), with Cárdenas once again playing a leading role. The screams of anguish and vituperation which erupted from the bourgeois press at this development—the hysteria was at its peak while we were in Mexico City—are eloquent testimony that what may be called the "new Left" is beginning to make real headway. There is a tremendous amount of poverty, hunger, disease, and discontent in the Mexican countryside, and also in the "belts of misery" that girdle the rapidly growing urban centers. The ruling bourgeoisie knows it and fears nothing so much as the growth of independent and potentially revolutionary organizations to give voice to the voiceless and strength to the weak.

The next few years in Mexico will therefore probably be a critical period, with new struggles developing on various fronts and at various levels. But it is obvious that revolution is not now on the Mexican agenda.

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Chile

Chile presents an entirely different picture. Economically speaking, the country, like most of South America, is in a bad way, and the impossibility of achieving anything approaching a satisfactory rate of growth without far-reaching agrarian and other reforms is well understood. Furthermore, the Chilean political system is an entrenched form of parliamentary democracy in which political parties ranging from traditional conservative on the Right to Communist on the Left function freely and openly.* In addition, the Communist and Socialist Parties have a long record of working together and are now allied with each other and with a number of smaller parties and groups in a Popular Action Front (FRAP) which came very close to winning the last presidential election and is planning to run the same candidate, Salvador Allende, a popular and highly respected physician, in the next elections which are scheduled for the fall of 1964. Needless to say, hopes of an electoral victory are running high in the Chilean Left, and there is considerable confidence that democratic traditions are strong enough so that the FRAP, if elected, would be permitted to take office and put its program into effect. The program includes domestic reforms which stop far short of socialism and a foreign policy which can fairly be described as neutralist.

On the face of it, there is nothing revolutionary about either the methods or the objectives of the FRAP. Its domestic program, indeed, could almost be described as an implementation of the professed aims of the Alliance for Progress, and in this sense the Chilean Left is trying to impose on the bourgeoisie the reforms which it lacks the will to impose on itself. This does not mean, however, that the prospect of a FRAP victory is contemplated with equanimity by either the Chilean bourgeoisie or its American "Allies for Progress." On the contrary. The reforms now proposed are looked upon as merely a first installment, with more and worse to come later. And the FRAP's neutralist foreign policy is feared in Washington as the devil

* On successive days we had tea with Communist Deputies in the restaurant of the Chamber and with Socialist Senators in the restaurant of the Senate. The atmosphere and the attitudes of political opponents toward each other reminded us strongly of earlier visits to the House of Commons in London.

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fears holy water. Let one country withdraw peacefully and quietly from the famous "inter-American system," so the reasoning goes, and the whole structure will come tumbling down. For these and other reasons, it seems clear to us that the ruling classes of Chile and the United States are going to fight the FRAP all the way down the line. Money will be poured out to win the elections for the bourgeois parties; and if this fails, a preventive coup d'état seems to us highly likely in spite of Chile's democratic traditions (in the peculiar logic of the bourgeoisie, military coups are sometimes necessary to *save* democracy—from the Communist menace of course: witness Guatemala).

Theoretically, a struggle of this kind might evoke a genuinely revolutionary response from the Chilean Left. It was, after all, the efforts of the U. S. and Cuban ruling classes to thwart and overthrow the Castro regime in Cuba that propelled that country further and further along the revolutionary road. And perhaps the same thing will happen in Chile. We hope so. But we would be less than candid if we failed to record our own strong impression that the Chilean Left, including the Communists, is not prepared, psychologically or in any other way, to meet the onslaught of reaction which it seems to us would inevitably follow a FRAP electoral victory. Under the circumstances, a successful revolutionary riposte seems rather unlikely. A FRAP government, taking office after a victory at the polls, could hardly be compared to the regime which was installed in power in Havana by the guns of a triumphant Rebel Army.

Chile provides what is perhaps the most striking example of a weakness which is common to most of the left-wing movements of Latin America (Venezuela is an exception which we shall discuss presently), namely, a lack of clarity about the nature of political power in class-riven, semi-colonial societies. The lesson of long historical experience is unambiguous: power, in Mao Tse-tung's famous phrase, grows out of the barrel of a gun. Neither the native ruling classes nor the imperialist overlords have any use for democratic forms except to the extent that they serve the needs of property and profits. Unless or until there is solid evidence to the contrary, responsible political leaders *must* assume that this state of affairs will continue to exist and must act accordingly. This does *not* mean they have

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to renounce peaceful and legal means of political struggle. What it means is that they must be prepared and must in every way prepare their followers for the renunciation of peaceful and legal means by the beneficiaries of the status quo. Electoral victories are important and may even be crucial; they should obviously be fought for whenever conditions make it possible. But it is essential to understand that they are the beginning, not the end, of the real struggle for power. It is this understanding which seems to us to be all too rare in the Latin American Left. More defeats and disappointments, we fear, will be suffered before the lesson is thoroughly learned.

Argentina

Argentina is a big country, in many ways a rich country, a country with great potentialities. Buenos Aires, its capital, with more than six million inhabitants, broad tree-lined avenues, and numerous green parks and open spaces, reminds one of the great cities of Europe. The population is entirely of European extraction and has achieved a relatively high level of education and culture. And yet in spite of all these advantages, it is no exaggeration to say that Argentina today is in a state of economic and political disintegration. The economy is stagnant and unemployment is rising; at the very same time, the government operates with a whopping deficit and a perverse inflation runs its course. The regime in power is a thinly disguised military dictatorship which enjoys absolutely no popular support and even lacks the confidence of any important section of the bourgeoisie; it maintains a precarious state of law and order by arbitrary methods of repression but is unable to formulate, still less carry out, any positive policies to cope with the country's pressing problems. The traditional political parties, which got something like two-thirds of the votes in the last election (March, 1962), are at loggerheads and in any case have no programs worth taking seriously. The largest political group, the Peronists, which got the remaining third of the votes, is both illegal and at the same time being wooed by other groups and factions eager to use it for their own ends. However you look at it, the situation is a mess.

Well then, you may say, what Argentina needs is a revolution. There is no great mystery about what needs to be done.

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Agriculture urgently needs to be strengthened; branches of the economy producing for export need to be expanded and new foreign markets opened; industrial development, which Argentina is quite capable of sustaining, needs to be planned in the national interest; many new jobs need to be created and the whole state apparatus needs to be reorganized and streamlined. The present system, however, is totally incapable of tackling these problems in a constructive way. What is needed therefore is a new system, and that means revolution.

All this is undoubtedly true. But needing a revolution and getting one are unfortunately two quite different things, and Argentina's chances of getting one in the foreseeable future seem to be very small indeed. The middle classes, which are relatively numerous in Argentina, tend to be both conservative and apathetic; while the active and militant section of the working class is still under the spell of Peronism, which has no clear ideology at all and only one solution to all problems: the return of the great man. We are frank to admit that we misunderstood and underestimated Peronism before we went to Argentina. As a social phenomenon we still do not pretend to understand it very well, but we no longer underestimate it. One evening with a group of the most class-conscious and radical Peronist trade union leaders convinced us of two things: that the hold of Peronism on the Argentine proletariat is profound, and that as long as this is the case the opportunities for growth open to a genuine revolutionary movement will be very limited.

Under these conditions, it is of course not surprising that the non-Peronist Left is small and divided. The old Socialist Party, earliest of its kind in Latin America, has been split three ways, and none of the resulting factions can be considered a serious political force. The Communist Party is larger, but it too is beset with internal divisions, and its traditional hostility to Peronism has severely restricted its access to the proletarian rank and file. It would be pleasant to be able to report, as in the case of Mexico, signs of new organizational life on the Argentine Left. Regretfully, we must say that we failed to detect them. The number and quality of left-wing intellectuals and artists seem to measure up to the standards of any other Latin American country. The revolutionary movement, on the other hand, is certainly one of the weakest in the whole region.

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Brazil

On the way from Argentina to Brazil we stopped over for a brief stay in Montevideo where we were received with customary Latin American hospitality and had an opportunity to become acquainted with representatives of all sections of the Uruguayan Left, including the editors of *Marcha*, one of the best political weeklies in the Western Hemisphere, which is much less known outside Uruguay than it deserves to be. If we nevertheless pass over Uruguay's problems, it is because the country is too small to play an independent role—it was created, as one Uruguayan friend put it, by the British to keep Brazil from sharing the Plata estuary with Argentina—and in the long run can only go the way its much larger and more powerful neighbors go.

Of these neighbors, Brazil, which has common frontiers with every South American country except Chile and Ecuador, is of course by far the largest both geographically and in terms of population. Moreover, Brazil has had the fastest rate of growth in recent years, and in the Rio-Sao Paulo-Belo Horizonte triangle possesses the most advanced industrial complex in Latin America. Brazilians are intensely nationalistic, proud of their achievements to date, and confident that within a matter of decades their country will become one of the leading powers in the world. In Argentina, one has the feeling of having come to a dead end with no way out in sight. In Brazil, on the contrary, one has the feeling of traveling fast through open country even if one is not very sure what the road is like ahead.

In these circumstances, the Brazilian political agenda is concerned with reform, not with revolution. Once again, as in the case of Argentina, there is no mystery about what is needed: agriculture must be modernized if the rapidly increasing urban population is to be fed, the urgent need for more exports is to be met, and a growing internal market is to be created; the balance of payments must be brought under control and foreign debts consolidated and reduced; the wild inflation of recent years—fruit of huge government deficits which in turn stem from lavish politically-motivated subsidies and a tax system which lets the rich off lightly—must be curbed; the impoverished and potentially explosive Northeast must be brought into the process of economic development; and to accomplish

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these and related goals the present helter-skelter growth of industry must be shaped and directed in accordance with a rational plan. The sixty-four dollar question in Brazil is whether the bourgeoisie can make these necessary reforms, or at least enough of them to enable a reasonably high rate of growth to be maintained.

For reasons which were summarized above, we do not think the chances are very good. The kind of agrarian reform and development that Brazil will need as its population shoots up in the years ahead (the rate of growth is one of the highest in the world) is much more radical than anything the Brazilian bourgeoisie has yet begun to think about. We do not believe it will rise to the task, especially since doing so would be bound to impose sacrifices on some of its own influential sectors. Nor do we believe that the Brazilian bourgeoisie will be willing to fight for the degree of independence from the U. S. which would be a necessary condition for establishing control over the country's balance of payments and introducing a reasonably effective system of overall planning. These are judgments which we are quite frank to admit are based largely on general inferences from past experience—that is to say, on theory—and which closer acquaintance with specific Brazilian conditions might lead us to modify. Further study is called for, but time alone of course will give the final answers.

In the meantime, what does the Brazilian Left think about these matters and what course of action is it charting? There is of course no single answer to this question, but all the same it seemed to us that there was a fairly broad consensus among leftists we talked to, including both Communists and independents. (There is no significant Socialist Party in Brazil, and the party which calls itself Social Democratic is one of the large conservative parties.) In the first place, the Left has no confidence whatever in the present Goulart government which it regards as fairly representative of the Brazilian bourgeoisie. Nor does it believe that the bourgeoisie, left to its own devices, will introduce and carry through the necessary reforms. It does not conclude from this, however, that Brazil must sooner or later take the revolutionary path and that it is therefore necessary to begin to develop a movement with revolution as its aim. Instead, it believes that the Left can develop enough political

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weight to force the bourgeoisie to accept what is sometimes referred to as a "popular government" which, with the backing of the masses, will put through the needed reforms. Presumably, this will be accomplished through a combination of electoral politics and mass pressure. Making allowances for national variations, this seems to us to be essentially the same perspective held by the Chilean Left, the main difference being that the Chileans expect to achieve success in the near future while even the most optimistic Brazilians see a long pull ahead.

There is another version of this theory which seems to be gaining adherents among younger functionaries in the state apparatus, especially those in the various public enterprises which play an important role in the Brazilian economy. This is that the trained economists and technocrats who manage these enterprises and man the government departments and agencies that deal with economic matters can become representatives of an objectively demonstrable national interest which, when the people become sufficiently aware of it, no government will dare to contravene. In either version, the state is assumed to play a relatively independent economic role and to follow the dictates not of ruling-class interests but rather of the interests of the nation as a whole.

Theories of this kind (and one meets them in many versions in many lands) are of course nothing really new, nor do we believe they are any more valid in Brazil than they have turned out to be elsewhere. The Brazilian Left, like its Chilean counterpart, will learn this sooner or later, but it may take longer in Brazil than in Chile.

Venezuela

Before we got to Venezuela, we heard stories about the crazy leftists in that country who were trying to stage insurrections without any real hope of success and thus were dissipating their forces and depriving the country of a meaningful opposition to the Betancourt government.

We found the reality to be very different. The two largest organizations of the Venezuelan Left are the Communist Party and the Left Revolutionary Movement (MIR) which broke off several years ago from Betancourt's ruling Democratic Action Party; and we were fortunate to be able to meet and discuss at

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length with leaders and members of both groups. They are wonderful people who are carrying on a gallant struggle under very difficult conditions. They are in no sense irresponsible adventurists; and, as Dr. Betancourt knows better than anyone else, they are maintaining an opposition which is more meaningful and effective than that faced by any other regime in Latin America today.

Tactically, the Venezuelan Left is both skilled and flexible. They use every legal method open to them, but when they meet with repression, which is very often, they fight back in kind. Pitched battles have been fought against Betancourt's police (everywhere in evidence and all carrying machine guns), and a substantial guerrilla campaign is being waged in the mountains of the state of Falcon, in the northwestern part of the country. No one knows how many guerrillas are now active, and the government blows hot and cold on the subject. But the latest official figure, issued a couple of months ago, was 3,000 which, if anywhere near the truth, is a very impressive figure indeed, many more than Fidel Castro ever had with him in the Sierra Maestra. The purpose of the armed struggle, as of the struggle by non-violent means, is not, as many seem to think, to overthrow the government and seize power. The leaders know perfectly well that under present conditions, international as well as national, this is not a feasible goal. The purpose is to force the government to change its policies, to drop its repressive methods, to move vigorously to secure a larger share of oil revenues for Venezuela, and to use these revenues in a planned way for the benefit of the masses. The Left is under no illusions that these aims can be fully achieved without a socialist revolution, but it thinks the only effective way to achieve any part of them is through militant struggle, and, no less important, that only through militant struggle can the masses be politically and psychologically prepared to make the revolution when the time is ripe.

The widespread support which the Left enjoys is proved by the fact that the very heart of the movement is in the Central University in Caracas which has some of the aspects of a revolutionary enclave in hostile territory. To go to the University, to talk to dozens of students from many schools and departments, to be privileged to address a large audience (even after

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a move from a smaller to a larger auditorium, some 500 persons had to be turned away for lack of space)—these were the most thrilling experiences of our Latin American trip. Nor is left-wing and revolutionary sentiment confined to students: it is also widespread in the faculties of the University. Among economists, for example, we would hazard the guess that there are proportionately as many revolutionaries in the School of Economics at the University of Caracas as there are (or were) New Frontiersmen at Harvard or unreconstructed champions of laissez faire at Chicago.

It is this massive support enjoyed by the Left at the University that has prevented Betancourt from taking over the institution and extinguishing its traditional autonomy. After all, he knows that his own political career began at the University where he and his fellow student conspirators plotted the overthrow of the Gomez dictatorship. And he must know in his heart of hearts that the true aspirations of the nation are still expressed by the gallant revolutionaries at the very center of the nation's intellectual life.

No, the leftists of Venezuela are not crazy, far from it. They, along with Fidel Castro and the generation of Cubans who are for the first time bringing socialism to the Americas, are the salt of the earth. For whatever mistakes they may make, history will absolve them. And for keeping the revolutionary banner high despite all difficulties and dangers, history will honor them.

Latin American Students

Lacking space to attempt a fuller analysis of the political situation in the countries visited, we must be content to conclude these notes with a few general comments on topics of current interest.

Not only in Venezuela but in every country, we were very favorably impressed by the students we met. To be sure, there are plenty of things wrong with the kind of education they are getting. The secondary schools and universities are still largely oriented toward the education of a small elite. Teachers are often poorly qualified and badly paid, with the result that they spend most of their time on other jobs and neglect their teaching duties. Living arrangements are unsatisfactory and

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facilities such as libraries and laboratories are sadly inadequate. All this and much more is undoubtedly true, but these are not the things that are likely to make the deepest impression on a visitor from the United States. In this country, student life is something apart from the life of the larger society. By and large, students feel that their whole responsibility is to themselves: they must get the right ideas, make the right connections, and acquire the right training so that when they get through with their formal education they can marry the right mate, get the right job, and bring up children who will in due course be ready to repeat the cycle. From infancy up, they are taught that if you take care of yourself you are doing your social duty; the other side of the coin is that if you fail to take care of yourself you are no good and deserve whatever comes to you. Whether anyone really believes these classic tenets of bourgeois thought any longer is an open question. Probably very few do, which makes the whole situation much worse. Nobody really believes anything. Life becomes directed to survival, having a "good time," and avoiding unpleasantness. Nothing else really matters.*

Students in Latin America are different. They have ideals. They think first of their country, not of themselves. The idea of living and sacrificing for something larger and nobler than their own private interests comes naturally to them. They *care*. And that makes all the difference.

Of course, many of them will be corrupted by the vile social reality into which they must graduate. The cynical "realist" who was a revolutionary in his youth is a familiar figure in Latin America. In fact, the governments of the region are full of them. They are the best "friends" of the United States.

But not all students travel that path, and we are convinced that the number who do not will increase from year to year. They are learning, more from history than from formal studies, that the ideals of their youth—patriotism, a better life for all, human dignity and solidarity—are not necessarily illusions but can become the realistic goals of meaningful lives. And in increasing numbers they are accepting the fact that this means

* This description does not fit Negro students in the South struggling against the iniquities of segregation. But they are, of course, a small minority of the total U.S. student body.

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revolutionary activity with all its dangers and rewards. It is from the ranks of these students that the future Latin American Fidel Castros and Che Guevaras will emerge.

Meanwhile, we would like to recommend to any U. S. students who may have the opportunity that they go to one of the larger Latin American universities for a year or more of study. In some respects, you may not learn as much as you would at home. But you'll learn a lot more about the world you live in. And you may even learn to live.

Attitudes Toward Cuba

We did not meet a single serious leftist in Latin America who is not an ardent supporter of the Cuban Revolution. They understand perfectly the motivation and aims of U. S. policy toward Cuba. The bogey of Communism doesn't scare them, and the more the U. S. builds it up the less they fear it. They know what has been accomplished in Cuba and accept the setbacks and hardships that have had to be endured as unavoidable and for the most part the work of the imperialists. There is just one thing that worries them, the extent to which Cuba, in resisting the U. S., may have fallen under the domination of the Soviet Union. The desire for national independence is a real passion in Latin America, and any encroachment on the sovereignty of any brother country is looked upon with abhorrence.

Against this background, it is easy to understand that the October crisis caused great concern among Latin American leftists. Few of them have ever given any thought to the strategic policies of the atomic powers—there do not even seem to be accepted translations of such terms as "first strike," "counterforce," "minimum deterrent," and so on—and many were either confused by the sudden appearance of Soviet missile sites in Cuba or believed the official U. S. explanation that they were put there for offensive purposes. Since it obviously could not be to the interest of Cuba to become a base for offensive action against the U. S., this planted the idea, or at least the suspicion, that Cuba was being used. And when Khrushchev made the agreement to pull the missiles out without consulting Fidel, the fears and doubts were intensified.

If the initial impact of the crisis was altogether negative,

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subsequent developments have done much to repair the damage. Fidel's rejection of unilateral inspection was not the act of a puppet, and Latins are very sensitive to things of this sort—much more so than the people of the U. S. The Cuban demand for an agreement with the U. S. on the basis of the Five Points has full backing, and Soviet support for the Five Points made a good impression. Moreover, we found that the people to whom we talked were very receptive to our argument (developed in the December Review of the Month) that the Soviet placement of missiles, whether or not it was a wise move, could not possibly have had any strategic aim other than to deter an attack on Cuba. In time, we believe, the Latin American Left will come around to the realization that in the present international situation, both as between East and West and within the socialist bloc itself, Cuba's position is a good deal stronger than it at first sight appears to be. Militarily, Cuba cannot be anything but a danger and a liability to the USSR. If nevertheless, the Soviet leaders find good reasons for continuing to extend protection to the little island, this can only mean that it is Cuba that is using the Soviet Union rather than the other way around.

Socialism and Economic Development

One final point. One frequently meets the argument that Latin America (as well as other underdeveloped areas of the world) must have socialism because capitalism, which is inseparable from imperialism, is incapable of generating the kind and degree of economic development that is absolutely essential to provide rising living standards for rapidly growing populations. We believe that this is so, but we think it is a great mistake for socialists to rest their case there.

Take a good, long look at the kind of societies that have been emerging in such relatively progressive Latin American countries as Mexico and Brazil. Then suppose, which is not the case, that there were no barriers to their growing faster and indefinitely. Would there then be no case for socialism in these countries? Is sheer quantitative economic development as such all that is important?

We think not. Mexico and Brazil are in fact horrible examples of what happens to an underdeveloped country that encourages a process of industrialization based on the private auto-

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mobile. You can get a lot of factories that way, and no doubt the people who work in the factories are better off than they used to be. But you also get a lot of automobiles and the kind of congested, polluted, stinking cities that go with the automobiles. These cities in turn act as magnets for the half-starving people of the countryside who flock into the Hoovertowns that surround them—"callampas" in Santiago, "favelas" in Rio, "ranchos" in Caracas: every country has its name for them. These people too may be better off than they were; otherwise they wouldn't continue to crowd into the cities. But they don't own automobiles and never expect to, and most of them will never get jobs producing automobiles either. The industrialization of the country neither gives them employment nor serves their needs. God knows how they manage to live, but there is little evidence that He cares. (Passing them by every day and seeing them in their misery tends to make everyone else callous to their fate as well.) It is of course worse in the countryside: capitalism's way of "solving" the problem of agriculture—if indeed it has any solution—is to ruin most farmers while enriching a few.

It simply won't do, and socialists should never stop saying so. Capitalism must be rejected not only, and not even primarily, because it fails to generate sufficiently rapid development. It must be rejected above all because it fails to provide a society and an environment worthy of human beings.

(February 18, 1963)

The challenge that Latin America represents to us today is not Communism. It is the challenge of the people, ordinary people, for a better way of life and a fairer share of the wealth they produce. We will win or lose this phase of the cold war to the extent that we and the Latin American ruling classes satisfy these demands or give hope of satisfying these demands. We will not win to the extent that we prevent Communism or frustrate Fidelismo.

—Herbert L. Mathews, Reflections, Chapel Hill, 1962

The world will not live in harmony so long as two-thirds of its inhabitants find difficulty in living at all.

—U Thant

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THE ALGERIAN REVOLUTION BEGINS

BY RICHARD GIBSON

Algerian socialism is still a promise, not a reality, but there is already every indication that the promise is real. At the beginning of June, 1962, the National Council of the Algerian Revolution (CNRA), highest body at that time of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), concluded its sessions in Tripoli with the issuance of a draft program intended to guide the first steps of a future independent Algeria. The Program of Tripoli committed Algeria to socialism and declared that agrarian reform would be the first stage along the road to socialism. There were numerous models at hand for study: the USSR, People's China, Yugoslavia and, above all, Cuba; but the drafters of the Program of Tripoli were not ready to outline any detailed plans for carrying out their own agrarian reform. Moreover, they realized that the question of agrarian reform could not be decided separately from the fate of the slightly fewer than one million European settlers who controlled the Algerian economy. And the fate of the settlers was one of the major items on the agenda of the lengthy negotiations at Evian between the French Government and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA). The Evian Agreements resulting from those negotiations were to constitute the most important obstacle to Algerian socialism. While admitting the possibility of reforms, the agreements guaranteed the settlers' property rights and stipulated that the settlers were to receive rapid indemnification for any property taken from them. After seven and a half years of bitter guerrilla warfare, the Algerian people wanted peace, even at the price of certain temporary concessions to France, which, for its part, promised considerable economic, technical, and educational assistance to an independent Algeria.

Richard Gibson, formerly on the staff of CBS and subsequently one of the leaders of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, is now in Algeria where he is the English-language editor of *Révolution Africaine*, a new weekly created by the Political Bureau of the FLN.

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But the voluntary flight of some 800,000 Europeans from Algeria was not envisaged at Evian. This exodus began in the early months of 1962 and reached its peak in April, May, and June. Haunted by their own racism and fearful of Moslem vengeance for the indiscriminate slaughter of Algerian Moslems by the killers of the European Secret Army Organization (OAS), the Europeans fled to France. Their massive departure paralyzed the Algerian economy. Farms, factories, and shops were abandoned by their European owners and managers. In the cities entire blocks of apartments and villas were left vacant. The situation was virtually catastrophic in the countryside, where thousands of acres of wheat waited to be harvested to feed a famished populace. Under these conditions, there was no question of sticking to the letter of the Evian Agreements and awaiting the possible return of the Europeans to arrange the harvest. Necessity forced leaders of the *wilayas,* the regional commands of the Algerian Army of National Liberation, and the UGTA, the until-then clandestine Algerian trades union confederation, to organize the harvest on their own initiative.

From this initiative developed the concept of *biens vacants,* literally "vacant properties." It was to provide the first government of independent Algeria, headed by President Ahmed Ben Bella, with the possibility of carrying out a speedy agrarian reform, despite the Evian Agreements, which Ben Bella has several times referred to as "leaden weights around our feet, a heavy weight." The appearance of *biens vacants* was to lighten some of that weight. Managers were appointed to run the abandoned farms and factories in a few areas, but in the majority of cases the administration was undertaken by *comités de gestion,* management committees, democratically elected by the peasants and workers in the fields and factories.

The Provisional Executive that ran the country in the transition period between French rule and the first independent Algerian government had no other choice but to give its belated approval to these initiatives. On August 24, 1962, the Provisional Executive issued a directive concerning the abandoned European property. Its approach was hesitant and merely stipulated that the peasants and workers had a right to take over the farms and factories, but only as an emergency measure

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in the absence of the European owners and managers who were to be reinstalled whenever they chose to return to Algeria.

By the beginning of September, the formation of management committees had taken on the aspect of a veritable mass movement. It also became quite clear that Algerian peasants and workers, unlike the Provisional Executive, did not view the occupation of *biens vacants* as a temporary measure. Not only did the peasants in a number of instances prevent returning Europeans from assuming control, they also prevented local Algerian landowners from parcelling out the land among themselves by seizure or through deals with the absentee European landowners. Where force was used to reinstall the Europeans, the local populations replied with force, sabotaging farm equipment and buildings and posing a serious threat of peasant uprisings.

On September 26, 1962, the newly-elected Algerian National Assembly invested Ahmed Ben Bella, one of the most outstanding leaders of the fight for independence since its beginning on November 1, 1954, as head of the government. The Ben Bella government quickly made it clear that, acting under the directives of the party of the FLN—later to become the country's single party—and in conformity with the Program of Tripoli, it intended to make Algerian socialism more than a slogan. One of the government's first steps was to create a Bureau of Vacant Properties, attached directly to the State Planning Board and the President's office. A small team of legal and technical personnel was recruited on the basis of their socialist views and their known militancy within the FLN. For this select team of administrators, who were to work in close liaison with another veteran of the struggle for independence, Minister of Agriculture Amar Ouzegane, the *biens vacants* provided the legal basis for a rapid agrarian reform which could indeed form the cornerstone of Algerian socialism.

The Bureau made no haste to define the concept of *biens vacants,* keeping it deliberately vague in order to extend the principle of socialization as far as possible without undue consideration for legalisms that might be of aid to those who sought to halt the process. But the Bureau's legal experts did find a significant precedent: a French revolutionary law of 1789, confiscating the abandoned lands of the aristocrats who

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had fled from France. Moreover, in their rough working definition of "vacant property," the Bureau took care not to limit this concept merely to abandoned property. It also aimed at declaring "vacant property" anything that was not sufficiently exploited, even though the owners or managers might remain in Algeria. This was aimed at those European settlers who, though remaining, were showing no intention of resuming production but were merely holding on until they could obtain advantageous bids for their property.

First on the order of business of the newly created Bureau was a preliminary nation-wide census of the farms and factories administered by management committees. Thousands of them had come into existence through local initiative and the vast majority were unknown to the central government. The acute shortage of qualified personnel at the disposal of the Bureau hindered the swift accomplishment of this task. Months later, not a week was to pass without the discovery of still more committees, even within the Algiers region.

A further step was the creation of a corps of controllers, made up of FLN militants, whose task it would be to inspect and supervise the work of the management committees. Later the Bureau planned to appoint directors to work in conjunction with the management committees in an advisory capacity. In principle, each farm or industrial enterprise was to be administered democratically by workers' assemblies. These assemblies would elect the management committees, made up—as most were from their inception—of three to six members who had to be workers themselves within the enterprise. A special effort was given to encouraging the participation of war veterans and war widows. In a Moslem country such as Algeria the participation of women as workers and administrators was also an important step towards female emancipation, especially in the countryside. By the beginning of 1963 only a minority of the many thousands of management committees had reached the goals set by the Bureau of Vacant Properties, but progress was being made and without undue disruption of production.

Seed, fertilizer, and tractors were being supplied by a number of government agencies. One of the most important was the *Societé Algérienne de Prévoyance* (SAP), which had

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been set up by the French colonial regime in the pious hope of extending Moslem small holdings through loans and insurance. With the war and as French military control of the countryside became more and more precarious, many European farmers discovered that SAP was a boon to them. It bought up thousands of acres of land which the Europeans were unable to farm or to sell to other Europeans. Obeying orders of the FLN, the Moslem peasants on the whole refused these lands and the SAP was obliged to run many of them as giant state farms with day laborers under French military protection. After independence, these farms passed into the hands of the Algerian state. The workers are paid 800 to 900 Algerian francs (approximately $1.80 to $2.00) a day. This is also the prevailing wage scale on the farms run by the Bureau of Vacant Properties. It is estimated that through the *biens vacants,* SAP, and other state-owned lands and forests, more than two and a half million acres of land had been socialized in Algeria by January of 1963.

On October 22, 1962, the government issued two decree laws regulating vacant properties in agriculture and industry. And on October 23rd, a further important step was taken with the issuance of a decree cancelling all sales and rentals of land after July 1st, the date of independence. This returned thousands of acres of land to the public domain. Determined to repress all speculation in the future and to punish those responsible for it in the past, the government and the FLN were creating special courts with full powers to investigate all transactions involving the possibility of speculation and corruption. The jurisdiction of the courts was to be retroactive to May 1, 1962, and sentences as severe as the death penalty were to be meted out to army officers and civilian authorities found guilty of speculation and corruption. The government pledged that "French Bugeauds" —Bugeaud, one of Algeria's biggest European landowners— "will not be replaced by Algerian Bugeauds." A number of arrests were made at the personal order of President Ben Bella, who declared that within a year the government would tackle the problem of cutting down large land holdings held by Algerians and spoke of a maximum of about 150 acres as a possible legal limit for private farms. Ideally, he added, the government hoped to see a move towards cooperatives.

The government has also turned to the problems of market-

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ing. In conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Bureau of Vacant Properties made a new endeavor in November, 1962, at the time of the picking of citrus fruits. An *Office de Commercialisation des Agrumes* was set up to control the sale of fruit from orchards declared vacant property. Eliminating middlemen and speculators, commissioners were appointed to market the crop, a large percentage of which normally goes to France. Despite serious efforts to sabotage this measure by native Algerian exporters and repatriated French settlers, who sought to block the sale of the fruit in French markets, the *Office* achieved considerable success. That success led in turn to the creation, after urgent appeals from the local population in the south of Algeria, of an *Office de Commercialisation des Alfas* (Office for the Commercialization of Esparto Grass). The immense concessions of a private French company, the *Societé Génerale des Alfas,* were transformed into two large cooperatives, with several hundred persons in each. Some 50,000 tons of the grass are collected each year in Algeria and sold on the world market. Falling prices and the pressure of Moroccan and Tunisian competition limit profits, but the new *Office* at least ensures a more just distribution to the local population of whatever profits there may be.

In December, control of commerce was taken to its logical conclusion, with the creation of an *Office National de Commercialisation*. In accordance with the socialist perspectives of the government and party, this *Office* seeks to eliminate middlemen from the circuits of distribution through price controls and marketing by government commissioners. One of its most immediate tasks was ensuring a supply of low-cost meat for the Algerian market. Also envisaged were linen and leather cooperatives and possibly the creation of chain stores throughout the country, although there were no plans at the time to eliminate the private retail shops then in existence. In addition, steps were being taken towards the nationalization of banking through the creation of a central bank for the issuing of new currency and the taking over of the system of municipal banks inherited from the French colonial regime.

Much less has been done in industry than in agriculture, first, because of the tactical priority given to agriculture in the reconstruction of Algeria and, second, because of the lack of

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trained personnel and the shortage of capital. Nevertheless, management committees were established in abandoned enterprises. Many of these factories were medium-sized or small businesses, and their French owners and managers often left them literally in ruins. Management committees were able to do little without loans from the state and/or private capital. It is worth noting that many of these loans from private Algerian capital were made without interest.

The most strategic investment of both state and private capital has been under study. The Algerian government has already declared its intention of not permitting capital a free hand in the nation's economy, but in the immediate future mixed companies are most likely to be the rule, with strong government and worker controls. The strategy of investment is not likely to follow the pattern of the former French "Constantine Plan" for Algerian industrialization. While this did bring a number of new industries to Algeria, it left relatively untouched the traditional sector of the economy. Many Algerian economists seem to prefer investment in terminal production—the finishing of certain imported products either for domestic consumption or export—and such industries as textiles which create greater employment possibilities. However, it is too early to speculate about the future of Algerian industry. Factories are resuming production and industrial unemployment is being reduced rapidly. The major concern of the government is agriculture, which remains the basis of the Algerian economy. Even the government's plans for housing remain vague, although a law is being drafted that would turn over to public and private collectives the large luxury villas abandoned by their French owners. Government initiative has also taken in tourism, with the creation of an *Office National Algérien du Tourisme*. This, too, is being carried out within a socialist perspective, with cooperative ownership of tourist facilities envisaged in most areas.

In the key sector of agriculture, an inter-ministerial commission has been established to bring together and coordinate the work of the Bureau of Vacant Properties, the Ministry of Agriculture, and various other government agencies. From the administrative and ideological work of this commission, aided by the directives and the rapidly developing cadres of the party

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of the FLN, is expected to emerge eventually an Algerian Agrarian Reform Institute.

Algeria's leaders have no doubts about their goals. Speaking to the FLN youth at El Riath on December 30, 1962, President Ben Bella declared that socialism in Algeria would be "an Algerian experience . . . specific to Algeria." And he added, so that there would be no confusion in the minds of his listeners, "our socialism will be the liquidation of privileges. . . . Between the socialism of Guy Mollet and the socialism of Fidel Castro, we prefer the second." Agrarian reform is the cornerstone of Algerian socialism. But for Ben Bella and the team of revolutionaries who share the power with him, the question is not one of agrarian reform, but of *agrarian revolution*—a revolution that cannot be prevented from spreading to every sector of Algerian life.

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AMERICAN RADICALISM: A REPLY TO MR. RADOSH

BY ROBERT FORREY

In the February issue, we published an article entitled "American Radicalism: Liberal or Socialist?", by Ronald Radosh, a graduate student in history at the University of Wisconsin. The following reply is by the Managing Editor of *Mainstream* magazine. Other *MR* readers are invited to send in their views on the questions at issue between Messrs. Radosh and Forrey. Anyone doing so should indicate whether or not he wants his name to be used. In any case, please make your comments brief. We of course reserve the right to decide what, if anything, should be published.—The Editors.

In the ten and a half pages in which he discusses what is wrong with the American Left, Mr. Ronald Radosh has painted a distorted picture of American history in the 20th century. As I read his article, he uncritically lumps together the Progressives of the pre-World War I era, New Dealers of the 30's, New Frontiersmen of the 60's, and—oddest of all—American Communists, the liberal radicals of Mr. Radosh's lexicon.

What is it, according to Mr. Radosh, that Progressives, New Dealers, New Frontiersmen, and Communists have in common? Mainly a political program which calls for reforms at home and exploitation abroad. In other words, progressivism and imperialism are opposite sides of the same coin. To the extent that Communists have supported reforms in the United States they have been helping spread imperialism abroad. Mr. Radosh cites as one example the relationship between the Left and the Roosevelt administration in the 30's. "During the New Deal, the Left uncritically beat the drums for Roosevelt, acting as a left-wing adjunct of the administration." According to Mr. Radosh's simplistic formula, support of the Social Security Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Wagner-Connery Act, the conservation of natural resources, or other progressive legislation of the 30's actually helped the monopolists in their quest for control of foreign markets and raw materials.

The 30's in the United States are the most slandered decade of our century. This is no accident since that decade witnessed

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the dynamic role which the Left is capable of playing in our national life. Now, in every way possible, the role of the Left in that period is being misrepresented, ignored, or blatantly lied about. Not all of the distortion comes from the Right. Mr. Radosh glibly dismisses the significant role that Communists played organizing the unemployed, working with Negroes, and galvanizing public opinion as a subordination to "the New Deal's liberal expansionism." The Left was at best "advanced humanitarians" and "professed radicals." What Mr. Radosh is really saying is that a radical cannot, in good conscience, help people under capitalism and still fight for socialism. So long as he thinks doing both these things is impossible, so long will he distort not only the history of the 30's but the history of radicalism in America.

Look at his analysis of the New Frontier. If you favor Medicare, public works programs, or aid to education, you are really helping the Kennedy administration foster neo-colonialism abroad. Mr. Radosh feels the real radical should not fight for measures like these but should rather expose the imperialist roots of all liberal-backed reform. In his own words: "While medical care for the aged is certainly desirable, radicals who back Kennedy in his fight for it forget that support of the liberal reform advocated by an expansionist administration is quite different from the more difficult job of presenting a radical analysis and alternative to the welfare measures of a stagnant corporate economy." It is this mechanical linking of reforms at home with expansionism abroad that leads Mr. Radosh to imply that real radicals should work for nothing short of immediate revolution. In reality the task of a radical is not so simple. While working for socialism and trying to convince the workers of the superiority of that system over capitalism, the radical must also help the workers, the oppressed minorities, and others in their day-to-day struggles with monopoly capitalism on bread-and-butter issues. A fight for reforms is part of the process by which working people in capitalist countries become politically educated.

The arguments against reforms and democratic struggles raised by Mr. Radosh are not new, although he writes about them as if they were. He misrepresents the Communist position when he implies that the Left, up to now, has given un-

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critical support to liberal-sponsored reforms and refrained "from any fundamental criticism of the capitalist system." The following, for example, is what the late William Z. Foster, Chairman of the CPUSA, said on the question of the relation between reforms and revolution:

> As a whole, the vast complex of democratic movements and struggles in the capitalist world tends definitely, on the one hand, to strengthen world socialism, and on the other hand, to weaken world capitalism. This is a conception far removed from, say, that of De Leon, who rigidly condemned such democratic tendencies as essential helps to capitalism and as disastrous to the workers. Basically, the democratic movements are an expression of the people's efforts to combat the harmful effects of the deepening general crisis of the whole capitalist system. They are not buttresses of capitalism, but forces undermining it, even though, under reformist leadership, often they may specifically endorse capitalism and be distorted in their purpose. This is why, historically, all these democratic mass movements have had to overcome bitter capitalist opposition. (*Political Affairs,* August, 1957, p. 43.)

In his criticism of the "liberal Left" or the Communists, Mr. Radosh focuses attention on their claim that the ultra-Right represents a grave threat to democracy and world peace. American Communists, including CP leader Gus Hall, were among the first to warn of the resurgence of the ultra-Right in the United States. Of this warning Mr. Radosh says: *"Such a strategy ignores the reality that corporate power is represented by the liberal administration itself."* Does Mr. Radosh think that Communists do not know that the Kennedy administration represents corporate power? Communists know this, but they know something more, too. They know that it will take more than denunciations to defeat monopoly capitalism. A Marxist-Leninist analysis of the American ruling class is indispensable to an understanding of what tactics radicals should employ. This kind of analysis—an analysis which takes account of all existing contradictions and tendencies within that class—is lacking in Mr. Radosh's article.

Ultra-rightists are a serious threat to democracy and peace because they call publicly for the unleashing of a war against socialist countries and the passing of fascistic anti-labor legislation at home. Mr. Radosh pooh-poohs the ultra-Right as a small group of unimportant crackpots. "In reality the rightist groups

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by themselves are unimportant." But how can anyone, especially a Marxist, speak of the ultra-Right as being by itself? It is an axiom of Marxist dialectics that nothing is ever by itself, isolated or independent of other phenomena. The ultra-Right has the support of powerful interests. Granted that it does not have the bulk of corporate power behind it yet. But who is to say that, as the crises of capitalism grow increasingly acute, the program of the ultra-Right will not be embraced by most of our monopolists? The ultra-Right—which has elected representatives in our government—is a weapon, kept in reserve by the ruling class, a kind of political poison gas which they might use when all else fails. And a military coup is not the only way the ultra-Right might come to power. If the political approach advocated by Mr. Radosh were adopted by the American Left, then I think the ultras would have a chance to rule by way of the ballot. An apathetic and politically misled electorate, a virulent right wing, a capitalism in the throes of economic and political crises, what better breeding ground could there be for fascism? In that case we would see coming to power the berserk elements of American political life. A Goldwater would not just be talking about a war. Once in the White House, he could do a lot more about starting one.

Much of Mr. Radosh's article is an implied attack on the united front thesis as formulated by Georgi Dimitroff in the 1930's. Mr. Radosh says, "A glance back at American history suggests that rather than having played a radical role, the Left has supported humanitarian efforts at reform, while refraining from any fundamental criticism of the capitalist system. By superimposing European theories such as 'the united front against fascism' on the American scene, the Left fallaciously stressed the danger of a business-supported fascist coup. Continuing in this tradition, the Left today calls for unity against the reactionary ultra-Right, a social force which is also said to present the danger of a Nazi-like revolt."

Dimitroff's theories about a united front are not invalid in America simply because Dimitroff was European. Fascism is an international phenomenon, and in fighting it Communists have not lost sight of the fact that the main force behind it is monopoly capitalism. However, a united front policy recognizes the necessity of joining with the broadest possible masses of

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people against the most chauvinistic and reactionary elements of monopoly capitalism—namely, the fascists.

In order to wage a broadly based struggle against fascism and the ultra-Right, it is necessary to avoid sectarian approaches which isolate the Left from mass activities. In his article, Mr. Radosh is unable to find a role for the American people in the fight against monopoly capitalism. His whole emphasis is on finding the right theory for the Left, but the most militant sounding theory is impotent if it does not provide for the channeling of the discontent of Americans into practical political activities. Certainly one of the most important mass activities today is the fight for peace. The fight for socialism must go hand in hand with a fight against thermonuclear war. Mr. Radosh is strangely quiet on this issue of war and peace. I don't think this is an oversight. It flows rather from his dogmatic thesis, a thesis which weakens rather than strengthens the forces of peace and socialism, a thesis which seeks to do away with monopoly capitalism by phrases rather than by a union of all Left and progressive forces. Dimitroff had warned about the dangers of sectarianism in the fight for peace:

> Phrasemongering doctrinaires . . . depict matters as if the question of war and peace depends only on the capitalist governments. Yes, this would be the case if the mass of the people were simply pawns in the hands of the government. But that is just the point. It is radically wrong to regard the mass of people as puppets in the hands of governments. . . . *The whole thing is to organize the struggle of the peoples for the maintenance of peace in good time and to carry it on continually and everywhere against the fascist war mongerers and their backers.* (*The United Front*, p. 175.)

Last October, during the Cuban crisis, a good part of the human race was days, perhaps hours, away from death. In that crisis, Goldwater was calling for invasion and war. Chester Bowles, speaking for a liberal wing in the Democratic Party, called for negotiations. Who does Mr. Radosh see as the more dangerous of these two individuals? He seems to think that Bowles is the real villain here, he and the liberals. This follows from Mr. Radosh's thesis that only the liberals represent corporate power, that only they are really dangerous. Mr. Radosh complains that while Bowles was in a mood to negotiate on the question of war or peace, he was still opposed to a socialist

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Cuba. The only thing that distinguishes Goldwater from Bowles, Radosh complains, is the methods they would use to eliminate a socialist Cuba. Goldwater was for war; Bowles was for some other method. Is this so small a difference? Do we really expect Bowles, a representative of the ruling class, to be for a socialist Cuba? This is not the issue. The issue is whether it is better to have a Cold War advocate or a War Now advocate directing our foreign policy. Mr. Radosh's thesis leads to the conclusion that it would be better to have the Right rather than the liberals in power, that things would get better if they would only get worse. The editors of *Studies on the Left* also display this "better the worse" thinking in a recent editorial. (Volume 3, Number 1, 1962.) They enumerate the advantages of having the ultra-Right replace the Kennedy administration in Washington. Judging from their analysis, the Left has never had it so good as it would if ultra-Right policies were employed by our ruling class. The only thing which prevents the *Studies on the Left* editors from becoming too enraptured with the possibility of an ultra-Right administration is the likelihood of nuclear war which it entails. But Mr. Radosh does not even seem to flinch at that prospect, if he is indeed even aware of it.

Mr. Radosh is like a swimming instructor who reads to his pupils the principles of keeping afloat and then, though they have never been in the water before, throws them all in over their heads. People will come to socialism not through theory alone but also through the daily struggles with the problems of capitalism—unemployment, discrimination, the threat of war, etc. It is through these struggles—and with the aid of socialist leaders and theory—that American people will become stronger, wiser, and more able to preserve peace and perceive the superiority of socialism.

One final point: one of the arguments used by reaction to prove that American Communists are subversives is the similarity of views held on many issues between various Communist Parties in the world, including the United States, to those of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The ultra-Rights were especially eager to have this damning parallelism used as proof to outlaw American Communists. The degree to which they have succeeded can be read in the McCarran Act. And yet we have Mr. Radosh, a radical, suggesting something of the same

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sort, not just in the paragraph already quoted, where he declares the united front policy European and inapplicable to the United States, but in his remarks about Communists in the 30's: "the Communists separated themselves from the regular liberal Rooseveltian only by their ideological and political tie to the Soviet Union. . . ." If a person in England happened to agree with Columbus that the world was round, both of them would draw many similar conclusions about the geography of the world in which they lived. Another Englishman who happened to agree with Galileo that the earth revolved around the sun would have been, like the first Englishman, no less of an Englishman because he adhered to the truth. Similarity of viewpoints, no matter how unpopular they may be at a particular time, does not constitute subversion. If, as Communists claim, Marxism is a scientific philosophy of life, then they would be expected to reach a degree of consistency in their conclusions about capitalism.

Perhaps I am reading too much into Mr. Radosh's article. I hope so. But anti-Communism, like ice cream, comes in many flavors, and from both directions, Left and Right. Mr. Radosh concludes his article: "Leaving liberalism to the liberals, America might yet gain an independent and growing socialist Left." As a person of Mr. Radosh's own generation, and interested, I am sure, in many of the socialist goals he is interested in, I nevertheless feel, despite his sincere desire for a resurgent Left in the United States, that his article is an example of one of the points of view that will hinder that resurgence, not help it.

The mere fact of awesome authority progressively delegated into the lower echelons of the military structure virtually insures the final holocaust. Not only do faulty information, bad judgment, rash action become at some time and place fatally inevitable, but one psychotic or one fanatic devotee of the let's-blast-'em-and-get-it-over-with school easily could settle the fate of the world and of mankind.

—*Fred J. Cook, "The Juggernaut," The Nation, October* 28, 1961

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WORLD EVENTS

By Scott Nearing

Step by Step into Another War

South Vietnam is the present testing ground of United States intervention in the internal affairs of southeast Asian countries. Invasion and occupation of the Philippines in 1898, of Japan in 1943-1945, of Korea in 1945-1950, and of Taiwan in 1949 were all precedents, pointing in the same direction.

Intervention in Laos and Vietnam began while the French were fighting their eight year war to retain a toehold in Indo-China. It continued after the Geneva Conference of 1954 had formally recognized southeast Asian independence of French imperial rule and provided for a plebiscite within two years to determine the status of South Vietnam. In 1956 the State Department vetoed the referendum on the ground that if it were held the Leftists would undoubtedly win it.

When it became evident in 1959 that the United States-supported government of Ngo Dinh Diem could not stand up against the growing popular demand for independence of imperialist interference, United States aid for the unpopular Diem regime was stepped up from a large military mission which was training, equipping, and paying the Diem armed forces, to the participation of United States personnel in military operations against the Viet Cong guerrillas.

During the last days of December and the opening days of the new year, the next step was taken. United States personnel, who had been firing only when fired upon, piloted the United States-supplied helicopters and manned the machine guns (*U.S. News & World Report,* January 14, 1963, "Flying with G.I.'s in Vietnam"). A week later *U.S. News* correspondents reported: "The war is being fought to destroy Communism in South Vietnam. American officers and men are involved both in the air and on the ground. And the toll of American dead and wounded rises steadily." (January 21, 1963, p. 46.)

Officially, it is admitted that the number of United States

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military forces in South Vietnam exceeds ten thousand. The plans, the money, the arms, and the supplies for this anti-Communist war are costing the United States taxpayers more than $400 million per year. France's army bled itself white in these jungles from 1946 to 1954. Warnings from Washington's European allies have been ignored. Bogged down in an economy stagnant since 1955, faced by growing budget deficits, the President and his advisers are moving step by step into a war on the other side of the planet, with victory all but impossible and humiliating defeat or a stand-off like that in the Korean War highly probable, and the possibility that this United States initiated local war may irrupt into an international military struggle.

Out of a Rocky Hillside

Initiative, resourcefulness, determination, and hard work have enabled human beings to win notable victories in their everlasting struggle to stabilize control over nature and her forces. Two of the most stubborn natural forces have been tough soil and capricious weather.

China's *Peking Review* of August 31, 1962, reports one dramatic example of this contest between man and his natural surroundings. Shashihyu ("the sand and stone ravine") is a North China village located near the Great Wall. Before 1949 the villagers cultivated a few semi-fertile plots scattered among the rocks. Peasants who tried to farm this barren land were desperately poor. Not only was the land untillable, it was also dry. Water for domestic uses was carried from a distant stream. The villagers were so poor that three-quarters of the eighty-three Shashihyu householders supplemented their returns from meagre crops by working away from home, when they could find jobs.

Aroused by the Liberation movement, the people of Shashihyu began discussing ways of lifting the village out of its poverty. There was general agreement that the first step was to find a source of water. With the help of a young geologist attached to the county agricultural office, water was finally located, but it lay more than sixty feet down through rock and hard-pan and had to be pumped to the surface.

Then the villagers faced their next problem: the rocky hillsides and the thin soil of the narrow rock-strewn ravine in

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which they lived. After much discussion the villagers decided on five moves: first, to clear away the rocks and build terraces on the lower slopes of the mountain. Top soil was carried to these terraces in baskets. Second, they had to create an area of flat land at the bottom of the ravine. To do this they moved 5,500 cubic yards of rock from the mountainside and used it to establish an acre of flat surface. Then they carried a foot of top soil and spread it over the leveled acre.

This operation took the entire village ninety days of hard labor. The third step was to interplant corn and sweet potatoes which led to an increased yield of both crops. The fourth step was to plant forest trees on the bare rocky mountainside, digging the holes in winter and planting the trees in the spring. This too was hard work, but the villagers stuck it out and got a good catch of young trees despite the rocky terrain.

The fifth step was to plant fruit trees on the lower slopes. This step met with stiff resistance from members of the village cooperative. "How," they asked, "can anyone hope to raise fruit among these bare rocks?"

When the fruit tree project was launched only one hundred volunteers agreed to help with the work. They dug 5,700 holes and planted 5,700 apple trees the next spring. Fruit trees in general and apple trees in particular like a deep open soil in which to grow. The hillsides were made up of loose rocks that had slid down the mountain. Between the rocks were pockets of soil. The apple trees sent down their roots through the loose terrain in search of nutriment and water. Evidently they found both because, helped by some watering, they grew magically.

Encouraged by the surprising growth of the apple trees, the villagers became enthusiastic and added plantations of peach, apricot, walnut, and Chinese date trees—100,000 fruit trees in all. These trees are still young, but for the last two years they have borne generous crops, sufficient to supply the village with fresh and dried fruit and to provide the Shashihyu brigade with one-third of its annual cash income.

Through the years Shashihyu village had been poor and debt-ridden. Thanks to the energizing effect of Liberation and of cooperation in collectives and communes, the village is not only self-supporting and out of debt but it is blazing the way

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for successful utilization of China's many barren unproductive mountain slopes and the rock-littered ravines which lie between.

"The Dollar Itself"

Rumors about dollar weakness, speculator raids against dollar stability, and White House assurances that "never, never will the dollar be devalued" are summed up in a scholarly study of the dollar's position, published in *Science,* December 7, 1962. The author is Professor James W. Angell of Columbia University. Professor Angell's conclusions concerning the dollar and its plight are summed up in his first paragraph:

> The last three or four years have witnessed spectacular changes in the international monetary and financial position of the United States. From the early 1870's through the mid-1950's the U.S. dollar, except for a few brief intervals, was always a "strong" currency, and in the decade after 1945 it was the *only* currency universally accepted in international payments throughout the free world. But in 1958 this picture began to shift drastically, and in late 1960 and early 1961 an international run developed against the dollar. Our stock of "free" exportable gold fell sharply; the open-market price of gold in London shot up to more than 20 percent above the mint price, in expectation of a devaluation of the dollar; and in the spring of 1961 an international rescue operation—the Basle agreement—had to be organized by the leading European central banks to shore up both the British pound and, indirectly, the dollar itself. The danger was real, and the damage to the prestige of the dollar, at least for the short run, was great. Nor is there any reason to think that the storm is over. On the contrary, the pressure has continued without substantial let-up, and grave new troubles may still lie ahead.

After a brief survey of the international monetary system, with its widely accepted gold standard from 1870 to 1914, the monetary chaos which followed in the wake of the 1914-1918 war, and the virtual monopoly of gold held by the United States in the years following the 1939-1945 war, Professor Angell discusses the persistent United States international payments deficits during the last sixteen years and the attendant losses of gold during the same period. In 1945 United States gold holdings stood at $20 billion, rose to $23 billion in 1952 and then dropped, irregularly, to the $16 billion level of late 1962. Foreign legal claims against this $16 billion gold reserve are in excess of $20 billion. If these foreign claims were pressed they could force

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the further devaluation of the dollar and upset the international monetary balance which presupposes dollar stability.

Professor Angell's remedy for this potentially dangerous situation is the conversion of the International Monetary Fund into an international central bank "with power to create its own deposit liabilities against appropriate security. . . . In effect, the Fund would thus become an international lender of last resort, just as each national central bank is now for the commercial banks within its own country."

Professor Angell notes that the proposal has "a number of defects . . . which over a period could produce destructive consequences." Most serious among these is the "grossly inadequate" supply of gold presently available to the national treasuries to perform all of the tasks required of it. In a word, the power age has outgrown the gold-based financial structure of 19th century capitalism. Patching and mending will not do the trick. The fragments and remnants of capitalist imperialism, in order to maintain the solvency of the badly damaged "gold standard" system, must be prepared to go in for a degree of planned organization of which they seem incapable.

"Every Day in Every Way . . . "

Reporting from Cuba, I. F. Stone wrote in his weekly newsletter of January 14, 1963: "Cuba seen from within looks very differently than from without. Food may be poor and lacking in variety, but there is enough to eat and no sign of starvation; indeed one Latin American reporter, who has been all over the country in the last few months, told me he thought the poor people of Cuba were better fed today than in any other country of Latin America."

We would like to add that the same comment would probably hold for employment, housing, schooling, health services, and recreation. Certainly any comparison of the status of Cuba's poor under Batista in 1957-1958 with their opportunities under Castro in 1959-1962 would favor the Castro regime.

Revolutions, like other changes in individual and social life, are bound to benefit some and inconvenience and disturb others. In Cuba, during the past three years, the condition of the rich has worsened while that of the poor has undoubtedly improved.

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There is another noteworthy difference between Castro and every other chief of state in Latin America. Castro is close to the Cuban people. A correspondent of the French *Le Monde* (January 1, 1963) wrote: "In no country have I seen such intimacy between a leader and his people."

Disappearing Democracy

"Disappearing Democracy" was the title of a two column article in the *Wall Street Journal* (December 12, 1962) editorial page. The article by Igor Oganisoff is date-lined from Seoul, South Korea. It begins with this key sentence: "Among most fledgling nations of Asia, American style democracy is already obsolete."

From Japan to Pakistan there are fifteen non-Communist countries. Four of these countries have "fully representative governments": Japan, the Philippines, Malaya, and India.

Several of the remaining eleven countries have experimented with democratic governments or institutions, then moved toward authoritarian rule. The experience of South Korea, the author writes, is fairly typical of the Asian trend. Beginning under United States auspices with democratic pretensions, South Korea now lives under a military junta which rules "with iron authority."

Faced by this failure of democratic processes to establish themselves in Asia and by the even more complete breakdown of democratic processes in Latin America, the newly emerging nations of Africa have only one recourse: the planned socialism which has met with such phenomenal success in East Europe during the last decade.

It is utterly unreasonable for the Great Powers to say to the less developed countries: "It is true we revolutionized our social systems. It is true that some of us executed our kings and emperors in the name of liberty, but this was a luxury to which we were entitled and to which you are not. You must bear all your present misfortunes because otherwise you will upset the balance of power on which we depend for our safety." We must be realistic and understand that such a policy is in fact impossible. We must accept change, even violent change, in the less developed countries of the twentieth century.

—*Dr. Nkrumah*

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BOOKS

BLACK POLITICAL POWER

BY JAMES BOGGS

In *The Negro Revolt*,* Louis Lomax gives a moving historical account of the step-by-step movement of American Negroes into American life: first, as imported slaves; next, their rise as free men during Reconstruction; and then, as a result of political manipulations both in the national Congress and in the Southern states, the rapid decline of their short-lived freedom until finally, by the end of the 19th century, they were not even being treated as well as during the period of slavery. Lomax also points out something that few other writers have bothered to say: that long before 1619, a number of Negroes had come to America, not as slaves with only their naked backs, but as part of the early force of adventurers, playing a role in the settling of the Western Hemisphere and bringing with them some of their own culture.

Then, very rapidly, Lomax traces the futile attempts made by Negroes to establish themselves in business with the aim of setting up a black economy. The failure of this effort left them with no alternative but to become wage earners in white industries. Next, as Lomax describes the different organizations that have been formed over the years as weapons for Negro liberation, the book really picks up momentum and one begins to feel the pull of the Negro mass. Not only does he deal seriously with the rise of these organizations and the role that they have played; he also makes a penetrating analysis of why today most of these organizations face the loss of support by Negroes. For either what they seek to achieve is no longer what the Negroes want, or the pace of their achievement is too slow for the impatient demands

Born in Alabama 44 years ago and bred in Detroit where he worked on WPA during the 1930's, James Boggs has been a worker at the Chrysler-Jefferson plant in Detroit since 1941.

* Harper & Row, New York, 1962, $4.50.

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and the pent-up emotions of black men in revolt. If for no other reason than to understand the shifts in the Negroes' support of various organizations and the contradictions and conflicts which are now faced by Negro leaders as they try to find out where the Negro masses are, this book is worth its price.

It is when Lomax tries to do what Negro leaders themselves have not been able to do, that is to say, tries to plot a direction for the Negro struggle and make proposals as to the Negroes' allies in this struggle, that he gets into serious trouble.

The NAACP set out as an organization to *defend* Negroes in the period when they couldn't defend themselves, relying mainly upon white courts to give favorable decisions to black men, under laws written and interpreted by white legislators, white judges, and white juries. It began to falter when it could not meet the new challenge of Negroes' wanting to go over to the *offensive*. The new organizations, like the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) have been mainly direct action groups. They take the law out of the courtroom and begin to implement or test it in action, in the streets and in the market place. This is the stage which the Negro struggle has already reached and from which it cannot retreat.

There is only one apparent exception to this generalization, and it is a most important one, the Black Muslim movement which the author too lightly dismisses as just a group of fanatics. It would be much closer to the truth to say that the Muslims are in fact planting the ideological seed for the next stage of revolt. The Black Muslims are doing something which no other Negro organization has attempted, rehabilitating Negroes spiritually and morally to the point where they feel that they are men in every sense of the word and the salt of the earth, and that, being men in every sense of the word and the salt of the earth, what they want is *not* integration with whites, but separation and independence from white society, because they reject white society and all its ways and values. This idea, which Mr. Lomax feels is mumbo-jumbo, is the heart of the Negro question and the American Revolution today. It is through this that we can begin to comprehend the Negro revolt in its present stage in the United States.

The United States was built up on an economy of slavery. That in itself was no crime. Many societies and countries have been based on slavery. The crime of the United States is that it is the first and only country which, having freed its slaves legally, by proclamation, by law and in the courts, then continued to enslave them and deny them equal rights on the basis of their color. The unique char-

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acter of the Negro question in the United States stems from the infamous raw deal of 1877 which permitted the Southerners to keep the Negroes in servitude as long as the Northern industrialists could industrialize the country and accumulate capital and the white workers could have homesteads in the West to provide the foodstuffs needed for an industrialized East. It is this deal which has given the Negro struggle both its *class* and its *race* character.

In most countries the struggle of the oppressed has been of a class character only. But in the United States the Negroes have not only been at the bottom of the economy, they have been kept there on a race basis. Therefore it is not just the economic system against which the Negro struggles, as many Marxists would like to have it. And it is not just a question of persuading and re-educating some Southern Bourbons and reactionaries, as the liberals would like to believe. The Negro is kept at the bottom of the economic ladder by another *race* which keeps him there because of *his* race and which benefits from keeping him there. Therefore, all those people above the Negro, i.e., all the whites, become responsible for the Negro's position, either actively or passively. It is not just Big Business or management or the rulers of the economic system who are allied against the Negroes. It is the white *people*. This is what gives the Negro struggle its peculiar duality: it is both a class struggle of the bottom revolting against the very structure of the American system, and also a race struggle because it is directed against the American white people who have kept Negroes at the bottom of their society. The rebellion of the Negroes today, like the slave revolts of the pre-Civil War days, is therefore a revolt, and not just some sort of a "race riot" as the white politicians from Right to Left continue to think of it.

Lomax ends his book by giving reasons why Negroes should stick with the liberals. Behind his reasoning is the assumption that Negroes want exactly what whites have. Lomax never faces the truth behind the common saying among Negroes, that all the white man has is his "white." This "white" is exactly what the Negro despises and doesn't want any part of, because it is nothing but racial superiority. So that when a Negro says that the whites have better opportunities, what he means is that these better opportunities exist only in relation to an opportunity that Negroes are denied. Or to put it the other way, when a Negro says that he wants equality of opportunity, what he means is that he wants *a system of equality* or a way of life in which there is no advantage to anyone on the basis of race. Under these conditions, what the whites now have will no longer exist. Only if Negroes wanted to be superior or to look down on another race would they want to be like

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whites.

Lomax thinks Negroes need the support of white liberals because he envisages the Negroes' being gradually elevated into white society. He can only see Negroes as a minority who must depend upon these liberal forces. This is a position similar to that held by most Marxists on the Negro question, except that the Marxists substitute the working class for the liberals as the ally that the Negroes need. Neither Lomax, purporting to speak for the liberals, nor the Marxists, purporting to speak for the working class, face the fact that great revolutions have never depended upon sheer numbers but rather upon the relationship of forces in the existing political arena. Today, when the existing political arena is a world arena, the Negroes' relationship is to the world. The more revolutionary he and the world become, the more clearly he sees this relationship between himself and the world as part of the revolution that is taking place in the world. As he knows, and as all white America also knows, "the whole world is watching."

Marxists are still thinking of Negroes in terms of their prewar role as sharecroppers in the countryside. They have not grappled with the new reality of the agricultural revolution in America and of the Negroes' migration to the big cities and their concentration in the center of these cities.

Both liberals and Marxists are imprisoned in thought patterns that have now become outmoded by the industrial and social development of the past generation. They are still thinking in categories of the democratic revolution at a period when Negroes have become the hub of the industrial centers of the country, and when what Negroes are fighting for is part of the world revolution and therefore against the whole structure of American society. They are looking so hard at the Negroes' color that they can't see the Negroes' social, economic, and world role in relation to the accumulation of capital, to the development of automation, and to the world revolution of the have-nots.

Theoretically, the Marxists are worse than the liberals. The Marxists recognize that a revolution is involved in the Negro struggle but still they want the Negroes to depend upon the white workers being with them. The Negro worker who works in the shop particularly knows that if he is going to depend on the white worker he will never get anywhere. The average white worker today isn't joining any liberal organizations or radical organizations. If he is joining anything, he is joining racist organizations like the Home Improvement (i.e., keep the Negroes out) Associations, Ku Klux Klan, and White Citizens Councils. The white worker is becoming more of an enemy every day. Labor unions which were supposed to be the most advanced part of America are to this day practicing and fostering discrimination in the

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same manner as every other segment of American society. Only recently, at the Chrysler-Jefferson plant where I work, when it was rumored that management was going to promote a few Negroes into skilled trades, it was the steward who rushed to the men to arouse them to protest against Negroes coming into the department. It was not the company's fault, as Marxists would have the Negroes believe. It was the fault of plain American workers. For when the Negro fights, he fights not "in the last analysis," i.e., not according to the thought patterns of the Marxists, but *in reality*. His enemy is not just a class. His enemy is people, and the people are American whites of all classes, including workers.

The liberals are basing their whole case upon the assumption that Negroes want to integrate into white society and be equal within the present mess. We have to be very clear about this. America has never been based upon equality for all. It has always been based upon equality for a few, with the others trying to climb up on each other's backs so that they could be equal to those at the top and above those at the bottom. Most Negroes in the United States not only know this, they also know that their greatest progress has come when disaster has struck American society rather than when America was flourishing or because of the goodness of the American people. The first real upsurge came with World War I when thousands and thousands of Negroes flocked to the North. The second upsurge came with World War II, when Negroes were able to work in industry en masse for the first time because of Hitler and Tojo, a fact which leads many Negroes to say today that Hitler and Tojo did more to advance the Negro cause in four years than Americans have done in four hundred. It is by facing this fact that one can begin to grasp that the Negro struggle is in no sense a struggle to salvage American society nor purely an American struggle; rather it is a struggle of an exactly opposite nature.

What is fundamentally wrong with Lomax's book is that it is written by a Negro who still thinks in terms of white power as naturally as he thinks of eating when he's hungry. His mind simply has not stretched beyond the idea of whites ruling and giving Negroes a greater share in this rule. He doesn't visualize that it could be the other way around, that it is in fact time for Negro political power to manifest itself. In the South today the one thing that both Negroes and whites are clear about is that when Negroes think of voting they are thinking of voting for Negroes to replace whites because they know that only when they do that will they get their rights. That is why whites are so determined to keep Negroes from voting. But up North where Negroes have been voting for decades, they still don't know what they are voting for. This is particularly true in

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the urban centers where Negroes have simply not grappled with what is implicit in the fact that who is Mayor and who is Police Commissioner is decided by where the Negro vote goes. In no major city have the Negroes yet elected a Mayor. Nor has any Negro writer yet realized that a Negro Mayor of a big city like Detroit or Chicago or Philadelphia would be as natural as an Irish Mayor once was in Boston or a white Mayor now is in Minneapolis or Las Vegas or some little town in Maine where the whites are the overwhelming majority.

It is only when Lomax can break clear of the image of the Negro always asking the whites for something and can begin thinking of Negroes ruling, that his mind will be able to move to where the Negro nationalist organizations have moved. The struggle of the Negroes in the very near future will be the struggle for black political power, and by black political power is meant, not the power of Negroes to put white men in office, to whom they can then go and ask for things, but rather their own power to dispose over things.

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(continued from inside front cover)

Four MR Press pamphlets—two new and two reprints—have just been published. The new ones are Oskar Lange, *Economic Development, Planning, and International Cooperation*; and Ved Prakash Vatuk, *British Guiana*. The reprints are Albert Einstein, *Why Socialism?*; and Friedrich Engels, *Principles of Communism*. Associates will of course receive all four free of charge. Others should consult p. 620 for prices.

On March 28-30, a Continental Congress of Solidarity with Cuba will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The organizing committee includes many prominent Latin Americans, as well as such personalities from other continents as Bertrand Russell. Any one wishing to attend or to secure more information should write immediately to Nedia Souza Leite, Calle San Jose 50, Sala 502, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The second number of *Root and Branch,* published by students at the University of Berkeley has just come to our attention. This is one of a new crop of high-quality college magazines and well worth your attention. The price of a single copy is 90¢, and the address is P.O. Box 906, Berkeley, California.

Our mail in response to the January issue (Indo-China border dispute and Carlos Fuentes on Latin America) has been unusually heavy and mostly favorable. Many readers ask that the Fuentes piece be issued as a pamphlet. We are thinking of a more ambitious project—to publish Fuentes together with a number of other, mostly recent, *MR* articles on Latin America in a small book. Further announcements about this later.

Another recent article that attracted much favorable comment was Joan Robinson's "Marxism: Religion and Science" in the December issue. Here is a typical comment:

> Thanks for bringing to the light Joan Robinson's article on "Marxism: Religion and Science." It is the kind of article the Marxist movement has long been in need of.
>
> Those who call themselves Marxists have tended to look on the words of the master as a sort of holy writ, to be quoted or appealed to on occasion, but never to be criticized or subjected to the test of experience. While using his authority as a mantle for their own individual theories, seeking here and there a phrase to justify widely differing policies, they have proclaimed his infallibility at every point. . . .
>
> Marx was a tireless researcher, a wide-ranging reader, a penetrating social thinker, a massive systematizer, an inspiring prophet. He provided the socialist movement with an historical background, a moral justification, and a sense of future inevitability which have served it well for more than a century and will still serve it well if properly used. We owe him a tremendous debt of respect and gratitude. But his system, complete as it was in his mind in 1848 and 1873, should not be allowed to become a straitjacket for thought in the older and changed world of 1963.

Correction: The back cover of the February issue gave $3 instead of $3.25 as the prepublication price of *The Menace of the Miracle* by Heinz Abosch. Publication date, April 22. Order now and save $1.75.

Usually at this time we have been in a position to announce the date of our second Associates' meeting; unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control, we are not able to do so now. We can say, however, that we plan to have the meeting some time in April, and that the subject will probably be THE NEW POLITICAL SITUATION IN BRITAIN. The speaker, we hope, will be Sir Leslie Plummer, Labor M.P. Full details in the April issue.

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